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COMPASSION

AN ODE

IN CELEBRATION OF THE CENTENARY OF THE
ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION
OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS.

BY— 10/6T

THOMAS HARDY.

COMPASSION.

I.

Backward among the dusky years
A lonesome lamp is seen arise,
Lit by a few fain pioneers
Before incredulous eyes.
We read the legend that it lights:
Wherefore beholds/ "~~Why should throughout~~ this land of historied rights
Mild creatures, despot-doomed, bewildered, plead
Their often hunger, thirst, pangs, prisonment,
In deep dumb gaze more eloquent
Than tongues of widest heed?"

II.

What was faint-written, read in a breath
In that year—ten-times-ten away—
A larger ~~clearer~~ conscience saith
More sturdily to-day.
But still those innocents are thralls
To throbless hearts, near, far, that hear no calls
Of honour towards their too-dependent frail;
And from Columbia Cape to Ind we see
How helplessness breeds tyranny
In power above assail.

III.

Cries still are heard in secret nooks,
Till hushed with gag or slit or thud ;
And hideous dens whereon none looks
Are ~~blotched~~ with needless blood.
But here, in battlings, patient, slow,
Much has been won—more, maybe, than we know—
And on we labour ~~stressful~~. "Ailinon !"
A mighty voice calls : "But may the good prevail !"
And "Blessed are the merciful !"
Calls yet a mightier one.

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